

Country Living, an aspect of how we lived

8/21/91

When I was driving out the lane at 4 a.m. to get the papers two fauns, a little less than half-grown, loped right in front of me, unfrightened. They then turned ^atoward the road going so slowly they were only just across it when I got there. A joy yet a hazard. (p. 3)

It was the little required to persuade me to add to the recollections I've been accumulating in disorganized, at least unorganized, bits and pieces in recent years. I'd thought of this earlier. Up at 2:45 and wide awake, my daily ration of coffee brewed and sitting with an ice pack on the much less ~~swollen~~ swollen left ankle elevated to the heart's level, feeling pretty good, and I thought back ^{to} of a pleasant visit yesterday. It was a reminder of the largely disappeared joys of childhood for most city and country children.

Our friend David Saulsbury, a criminologist in the Baltimore city police headquarters who arranged his hours to begin work early so he could be free when ^{his} two wonderful boys 7 and 9 are home from school, had phoned to ask if he could bring them so they could catch and replace an escaped pet frog. Vincent and Nicholas had been here before, catching what attracted them, including a bullfrog it would have been ~~very~~ difficult to keep and quite expensive to feed (insects for feed are costly) and collecting a variety of quartz stone that appealed to them. David and I arranged that, Lil having a headache and an irritated eye from the laser procedure to correct a narrowed blood vessel, to go in town and bring supper home from Hana's, the excellent small restaurant of our Korean friends, Everett and Nicole Phak. I'd told David that having the boys ^{near} here would be best medicine for Lil. It was! The boys caught a frog, ignored the crayfish this time, and had a suitable container for transporting it.

They are bright, delightful normal boys in all respects save one- they are intellectually advanced for their years. With a very wide range of active interests. We enjoy them, they enjoy us and they are always a delight to us. Typically, after they hugged us goodbye, they had to make another trip to the pond.

Their enjoyment, our enjoyment of them and their father's pleasure and that they had lifted Lil's spirits so much and eased her anxiety and discomfort so much was so good and so enjoyable to have in mind sipping hot coffee while chilling the raised ankle I thought of it instead of reading as usual. It reminded me of our farming days when many children, not a few total strangers, used to visit our farm, on the edge of a small community of then only about 100. The kids were from the neighborhood, a few were from Frederick (we then lived at Hyattstown, 12 miles southeast of Frederick toward Washington) and quite a number from the Washington area.

We then hatched our own fertile eggs for the meat chickens we raised and I'd arranged for the weekly hatchings to begin Friday's so kids could observe it over the weekends. All our animals were tame so the kids desiring it could ride the backs of the cattle and play with the goats.

The more the children enjoyed seeing the chicks escaping the shells and dropping ex-

exhausted from that great effort, for them, and then could see how rapidly they were so active and alert, enjoyed holding the little but quite animated fluffy bits, and were delighted when they gathered the eggs we sold and all the other little things so foreign to almost all children in modern society, the more we enjoyed it. The amount of my time required was relatively little and I was more than repaid for it!

We used to have fairly regular visits from the agriculture faculty of the University of Maryland, not only those in poultry. One of those in poultry, Professor George Quigley, dropped off unannounced while some kids were there. (They ^{professor} were more expectable at supper time, such as Lil's fame as a cook. She'd won the national chicken cooking championship in as I now recall, 1957, and the word got around in college park. Those who came ranged from the poultry faculty to ag economics and even the vet who taught such more arcane skills as horseshoeing. They also used me as a consultant on some aspects of of marketing and, as the U.S. experimental station at Beltsville also did, on quality production and marketing of specialty products.)

Quigley was fascinated by what he observed. He told me while we ate, "I'm going to steal this from you!" I told him I thought that a great idea. ^{They set up} ~~The rest~~ was what as of only a few years ago, still existed, a "touching" tiny so-called farm. They called it Old MacDonald's Farm. It is at Wheaton, just over the line from the District, in Montgomery County, Maryland.

Our friend Jack Frankel, a cantor serving as a substitute rabbi with the Jewish Welfare Board, looking out for the interest of Washington-area Jewish service personnel, and his wife Vicki, used to bring up those families desiring to see these things or introduce their kids to them immediately after the Jewish high holidays. (Vicki, born in what then was known as Persia, had had to flee Iran with her father, an opera singer, to Paris, where as a little girl she was taken in by nuns and became an underground courier.) They made a picnic of a Saturday afternoon and parents and kids loved it.

(The FBI loved it, too, ^{when it} ~~and~~ gave an entirely different version to the LBJ White House in 11/66. It said that Lil and I "annually celebrated the Russian Revolution with a gathering for about 35 strangers at our home." Close to precise FBI words. You can imagine the impact on the LBJ White House of this complete fabrication.)

I don't remember when we started doing this, although before we hatched our own eggs there were occasional visits from children from the area and from cities, with and without parents from the area, ~~and with from any distance.~~

With the nearing of the end of winter waterfowl began laying eggs and we hatched them, so seasonally the visitors enjoyed them, too.

I had "wild" geese, Canadian hinkers, so tame they came and ate bread from my mouth without biting me, then brought their young, when old enough, to do it, too. Most of the kids feared doing this but they loved to watch it.

Our present family doctor is an accident growing from wuch a visit. Fresh from medical school he joined the practise of a doctor who brought his kids to see these things. When Wil fell and hurt a knee and we were members of GHA in DC, I took her to the Frederick hospital emergency room. They asked the local doctor's name and his new associate was by accident then in the hospital. That was out introduction to him.

The university and the extension service ^{also} picked parts of this up for special occasions, when they had displays at malls and things like that. They had eggs hatch so all the kids and their parents could see it.

As I noted in an explanation of a recent letter to our former Congressman and Senator, Max Mathias, when we liquidated the farm we gave his then small boys, now probably parents, two of the incubators and fertile eggs they then hatched, ducks, and raised on a farm they owned in nearby West Virginia. This is to say that the interest had no limits.

Reminds me that Eisenhower raised some of our ducks at his Gettysburg farm. I hope in previous reminiscences I included that because some of that story is funny and a real indictment of government concepts of "security."

And this reminds me that the winter before we did liquidate the farm I got the Peace Corps its first good publicity break with a sensible project I do not now go into that was immediately dubbed by AP reporter Martha Cole as "Geese for Peace." Got international attention but the lesson was lost on our own college educated ignoramuses. Again, I hope I remember ^{ed} that, with all ramifications.

Society changes but children do not, not when small in any event, and they still love what was and no longer is commonplace when they can see it and be with it.

Like the Saulsbury boys wanting to come back to catch a replacement frog.

P. 1, deer as hazard: not only must I be careful in our driveway before daylight, I must be also on the highway near here. I've had deer dash right in front of the car long before daylight when there were no other headlights visible to them, there being no other cars on the road. The ^{early} morning Belle drove us to Johns Hopkins for the arterial catheterization based on which I then had heart surgery, a deer ran right in front of her, she ran over it and maintained control of the car, and it did about \$5,000 damage to her car. The dozen pheasants we had turned loose when we moved here, the several coverys of bobwhite quail that were here and many of the small animals have disappeared or been greatly reduced in number. But the deer are much more numerous in the entire area. They are big enough to cause serious, sometimes fatal accidents.